

Dear Chairman Vaupel,

I am writing in support of House Bill 5857, the STOP MI bill, which aims to prevent new opioid addiction among teenagers by preventing pilfering from the family medicine cabinet.

First, let me thank you for the work you have already done to save lives in the midst of this unprecedented wave of deaths from opioid overdose. Michigan has been a leader in this regard, and I applaud your work.

As a physician, I see firsthand the damage done to individuals and families by opioid dependence. I have seen lives lost, loved ones devastated, and careers destroyed. Most concerning, I have seen many young people sacrifice bright futures for little white or blue pills.

In 2016, Michigan lost the equivalent of three high schools full of teenagers to opioid overdose. The death toll from 2017 will undoubtedly be higher. It's time to do something to stop this disturbing trend.

Teens are nine times more likely to get opioids from home than from a drug dealer. Many report "pilfering"—secretly taking a few pills at a time from another person's prescription—as a common way they get access to opioids. **If we are to stop the flow of newly addicted teenagers, we must prevent easy access to addictive pills.**

Current "childproof" prescription medication bottles, implemented nearly 50 years ago, were designed to prevent toddlers from accidentally ingesting prescription medications. In adopting this mandate, a handful of policymakers set a precedent that would save tens of thousands of lives over ensuing decades. In 2018, you have the opportunity to make a similar impact.

HB 5857 would require that addictive opioids and Schedule II drugs be dispensed in locking prescription vials. The vials are equipped with a four-digit combination that makes pilfering medications nearly impossible without detection, while maintaining simplicity for patients. The ease with which this policy can be implemented and its anticipated effectiveness is why **my colleagues and I made engineering strategies such as this one of our top recommendations in our recent Johns Hopkins report on evidence-based opioid policy.**

As a health policy scholar and physician on the front lines of the opioid epidemic, I strongly encourage you to stop the pipeline of opioid deaths in Michigan by voting "yes" on HB 5857.

Sincerely,



Dr. R. Sterling Haring

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